Petr Sevast'anov and his expeditions to Mount Athos (1850s): two cartons from the French Photographic Society

Lora Gerd

Chief researcher, St. Petersburg Institute of History (Russian Academy of Sciences), St. Petersburg, Russia

Lecturer, St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia

Loragerd@gmail.com

Abstract

The Russian antiquarian and explorer of the Orthodox East Petr Ivanovich Sevast'anov was one of the first to take photos of the architectural monuments, art treasures and manuscripts of Mount Athos. During the 1850s he organized several expeditions. In 1856, Sevast'anov studied photography in Paris at the atelier of Belloc and bought the materials and equipment needed. In March of 1857, he arrived at Athos and started his work in St. Andrew's Skete. With the assistance of the librarian of St. Panteleimon's Monastery Azarii, Sevast'anov got access to many Greek and Slavonic manuscripts. In October of 1857, he returned to Paris and presented the results of his work in a photo exhibition, followed by a public lecture at the Academy on February 5, 1858. The recently discovered two large format cartons of Sevast'anov's photos at the French Photographic Society, along with the correspondence preserved in his archives, are an important contribution to the history of Byzantine Studies.

Keywords

Mount Athos – photography – Byzantine art – Greek and Slavonic manuscripts – icons – French Photographic Society – history of Byzantine studies

The history of Russian byzantology has been a subject of many research works during the last three decades. Nevertheless, still many gaps can be found. Very little is known about the work of the Russian scholars during their stay abroad.

FIGURE 1 Carton No. 1

This is also the case of Petr Sevast'anov, the famous collector, explorer of Mount Athos and photographer of the mid-19th century. Two unknown large format (70×89 and 70×85 cm) cartons with Sevast'anov's colloid process photos of objects from Athos were recently found in the French Society of Photography (S.F.P.) in Paris. The cartons (dated 1857) contain 19 (11+8) photos of Slavonic and Greek manuscripts, acts, icons and items of applied art. The article aims at answering the following questions: 1) what was the place of these cartons in Sevast'anov's research on Mount Athos 2) what were the reasons and circumstances of preparing these materials in Paris at that time.

The origins of photography in France bring us to August 19, 1839, when the invention of Louis Jacques M. N. P. Daguerre was first presented to the public at the Institut de France. The new discovery was highly estimated for the progress of arts and science.¹ In 1839, three main techniques were dominant: the daguerreotype, the photogenic sketch of Talbot and the direct positive of Bayard. In January 1841, Talbot announced another method, called calotype, which permitted to produce a negative (a latent picture).² For some time it could not however replace the daguerreotype, because it required more time, precise work and was more expensive, so its destiny was to become a method of the "belle image" in the cabinets of curiosities. Promoting his invention, Talbot

1 Michel Frizot, *Nouvelle histoire de la Photographie*, Paris, 2001, pp. 23-31.

2 Richard R. Brettell et al., *Paper and Light: the Calotype in France and Great Britain, 1839-1870*, Boston, London, 1984; A. Jammes, E. Parry Janis, *The Art of the French Calotype*, Princeton, 1983.

FIGURE 2 The Zographou Glagolitic Gospel 11th century, ff. 76v-77

published several albums of artistic photographs.³ In the mid-1840s these so called “sun pictures” were taken by British travelers in the Mediterranean: reverend Bridges and some members of Talbot’s family.

The success of photography at the Great Exposition in London in 1851 was followed by the foundation of the Photographic Society in 1853.⁴ In 1851, La Mission héliographique was created in France, with a goal of taking photographs of historical monuments around the world, and more specifically, of monuments from the Middle Ages. Simultaneously the first French manuals on photography were edited.⁵ Already in 1847, a cousin of Nicéphore Niépce,

3 *The Pencil of Nature*, London, 1844-1846, 2nd ed. N. Y., 1989; *Sun Pictures of Scotland* (1845); *Annals of the Artists of Spain* (1848).

4 Michel Frizot, *Nouvelle histoire de la Photographie*, pp. 64-65.

5 L. Blanquart-Evrard, «Procédés employés pour obtenir les épreuves de photographie sur papier», in : *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des sciences*, 27 janvier 1847 ; Id., *Manuel de photographie sur papier*, Paris, 1851; G. Le Gray, *Traité pratique de photographie sur papier et sur verre*, Paris, 1850 ; other editions : 1851, 1852, 1854.

Abel Niépce de Saint-Victor, introduced the usage of a glass for the albumin procedure: this method was included in later manuals. On November 15, 1854, the French Photographic Society was created; its first president was Victor Regnault, member of the Academy of Sciences and Director of the Sèvres manufacture. The Society started editing a journal (*Bulletin de la Société Française de Photographie*, furtherafter F.S.P.), which, along with “La Lumière”, became a platform for publications. The Society also started exhibitions (the first one in 1855). Finally, the usage of liquid collodion since the mid-1850s brought a new wave of expositions with the participation of famous maîtres of the time, such as Charles Nègre and Gustave Le Gray. The end of the 1850s, with the work of famous ateliers in Paris, the epoch of Napoleon III was the right time for this fast flowering of photography.

Following in the steps of Napoleon’s expeditions to Egypt, many romantically minded archaeologists and travelers headed there. Talbot himself was an Egyptologist, and after his invention of calotype, a number of French (Du Camp, Teynard, Salzmann) and British (Bridges, Wheelhouse, Smith, Graham) specialists worked on the banks of the Nile, collaborating with the professionals already installed there (such as Antonio Beato and Adrien Bonfils), as well as with archaeologists. The depiction of the antiquities of Italy had been a subject of special attention already since the early 1840s. In the mid-1840s attention turned to Greece. Archaeology became one of the main outlets of photography, providing both precise depiction of objects and a completely different means for research.⁶

Russia did not ignore the newfound interest in the exploration of the Middle East. Its perception of history had, however, some peculiarities. Unlike France and Britain, Russia had a deep historical connection with the Christian East. This tradition was revived during the romanticism of the 19th century, and especially following the Crimean War, when high society, including members of the Royal Family, showed a strong interest in discovering the history of the Orthodox East. The political interests, given the bounds of the Eastern question, combined with messianic ideas and a scientific approach, formed this aspiration in Russian society, which brought about the rapid development of research in the field of Christian art and archaeology. The interest in studying Byzantine and Old Russian, art as well as searching for ways of its possible implementation in church construction in the mid-19th century, led to the formation of the “Russian-Byzantine” style in Russian architecture and painting. This line of scholarship, combining both Eastern and West European tendencies, found strong support among members of the Royal Family, and especially

6 Michel Frizot, *Nouvelle histoire de la Photographie*: 76–80.

among the President of the Academy of Arts, Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna, and the Vice-President, Grigorii Gagarin. An icon painting department was created at the Academy in 1856, and, starting in 1857, Gagarin specially cared about the copying of byzantine miniatures from the manuscripts of the Paris National Library.⁷ A project of delegating young Russian students to the Greek lands for studying the best examples of Byzantine painting was considered at the end of the 1850s by Antonin Kapustin, a priest at the Russian church in Athens.⁸

The idea of systematically studying the artifacts and wall paintings of Mount Athos was first proposed by the traveler and church politician Andrei Murav'ev in 1850. In a note addressed to the Holy Synod, he proposed to delegate a team of artists for making copies from frescos that might well soon disappear.⁹ In May of 1852, the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Count Nikolai Protasov, presented another note with similar content, but the Crimean War made the realization of the plan impossible. Following the war in 1857, the new Ober-Procurator of the Synod, Alexander Tolstoi, came back to the project of an expedition to Mount Athos, proposing the participation of the Synod in its financing and the inclusion of two students from the Theological Academy. The interest of the Synod coincided with that of the Academy of Arts, and its President, the Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna. Surely the special attention paid to these projects was related to the general direction of searching for a new Middle East policy and new possibilities for exploration in the Orient, carried out by her brother, the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. First Archimandrite Porfirii Uspenskii was supposed to lead the expedition, but later another, more suitable candidate was proposed – Petr Ivanovich Sevast'anov – who was considered more experienced in the new technical methods.

7 Iu. R. Savel'ev, «Византийский стиль» в архитектуре России. Вторая половина XIX-начало XX века [*The Byzantine style in Russian Architecture*, St. Petersburg, 2005; A.V. Kornilova, Григорий Гагарин. Творческий путь от романтизма к русско-византийскому стилю [Grigorii Gagarin. *An Experience from Romanticism to the Russian-Byzantine Style*], Moscow, 2001.

8 Антонин Капустин, архимандрит, Донесения из Афин. 1851-1860 [Antonin Kapustin, Archimandrite, Reports from Athens. 1851-1860], ed. L.A. Gerd, Moscow, 2018.

9 The note «On Athos Icon painting» was presented to Ober-Procurator Nikolai Protasov in March of 1850. Edition: K.A. Vach, I. Ju. Smirnova, «Муравьев А.Н. Записка об иконописании Афонском» [Murav'ev A.N. A Note on Athos Icon Painting], *Православный Палестинский сборник* 112 (2016), pp. 387-394.

1 Petr Sevast'anov and His Expeditions to Mount Athos

Petr Ivanovich Sevast'anov (1811-1867) was born in a family of a merchant in Penza province. After years of work as a lawyer, in 1851 he received an inheritance and retired from service. In 1851 and 1852 he travelled to the East, visiting Greece, Egypt, Syria, Palestine and also Mount Athos. He received the idea of using photographic methods for documenting ancient artifacts probably from the architect Vasilii Stasov and another close friend, the photographer Sergei Levitskii.¹⁰ In 1856, Sevast'anov arrived in Paris, where he took ten lessons in photography from Auguste Belloc,¹¹ bought the necessary equipment, and, in March of 1857, returned to Athos. He gave an essential donation to the Russian St. Andrew's Skete and, after installing there, organized a photo laboratory aimed at exploring the libraries of Mt. Athos, as well as artifacts of art and architecture. In October 1857, Sevast'anov left Athos; back in Paris, he demonstrated the photos of the treasures he had found in the Photographic Society.

His next expedition (April—September 1858) resulted in another series of negatives and printed photos, demonstrated first in Paris and later in Russia (in Moscow and Petersburg). The longest and most fruitful of Sevast'anov's expeditions to Mt. Athos was in 1859-1860. The budget for this enterprise (16.000 rubles) was provided both by the Synod and the Empress Maria Alexandrovna.

¹⁰ Levitskii, as well as another owner of a photo atelier in Petersburg in the 1850s, Alexander Shpakovskii, had studied photography in Paris. See also: N. Iu. Avetian, "Фотографическая деятельность капитана А.И. Шпаковского" [Photographic Activities of Captain A.I. Shpakovskii], *Труды Государственного Эрмитажа*, vol. 91. Pamiati G.N. Koshelevoi [In memoriam of G.N. Kosheleva] (Conference proceedings, December 19-21, 2016), St. Petersburg, 2018, pp. 300-312; I.O. Terent'eva, "К истории развития фоторепродукции во второй половине XIX века (по материалам собрания отдела истории русской культуры Государственного Эрмитажа)" [Toward the History of the development of Photographic reproduction in the Second Half of the 19th Century (using materials from the Russian Culture Department collection at the State Hermitage)], *Ibidem*, pp. 312-321; *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, ed. John Hannavy, N. Y.--London, 2007, vol. 2, pp. 853-855. The first Russian manuals of practical photography are also dated to the 1850s: A. Ianysh, *Фотография на стекле с коллодионом, альбумином, стереоскоп, стереоскопические изображения на бумаге и стекле и фотографический процесс на бумаге* [Photography on Glass with Collodion, Dry Collodion, Stereoscope, Stereoscopic Images on Paper and Glass and the Photographic Process on Paper], St. Petersburg, 1858.

¹¹ Auguste Belloc (1800-1867) worked in daguerrotypes, stereoscopic images and collodion. He was among the first who took care of popularizing photography, gave lessons and wrote manuals. He made a series of stereoscopic pictures of nude models, and was even prosecuted by the police. Author of the manuals: *Catéchisme de l'opérateur photographe*, Paris, 1857; *Les quatre branches de la photographie*, 1855, 1858; *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, vol. 1, p. 146; François Boisjoly, *Répertoire des photographes parisiens du XIX^e siècle*, Paris, 2009, p. 36.

FIGURE 3 The Zographou Glagolitic Gospel 11th century

Among the members of the expedition was F. Granovskii (a student of the Academy of Arts), N. Vodin, the artist F. Klages, photographers Kh. Khristov and Auguste Leborgne, and two topographers. Another important participant was Archimandrite Antonin Kapustin, the priest at the Russian church in Athens, who worked on exploring the manuscripts of the Athos libraries between July and October 1859.¹²

¹² Antonin Kapustin, the superior of the Russian church in Athens, was among the pioneers of photography in Greece. Antonin started by taking portraits of the clerics of his church, something completely unknown in the history of Greek photography, as well as views of the antiquities of Athens. During the 1850s, there were several attempts to make photographic albums of Athens and Greece. Along with foreigners (such as James Robertson in 1854), local photographers Petros Moraites and Philipos Margaritis had been practicing since the end of the 1840s, and Dimitrios Konstantinou – since 1858. In 1856, Antonin took his first lessons in calotype from Margaritis, in 1858 Konstantinou trained him in collodion process. In July of 1859, Petr Sevast'yanov arrived in Athens and spent a few days working in the byzantine Daphni monastery. Here, using dry collodion process, the two of them took pictures from the mosaics of the dome of the catholicon. In August of 1859 Antonin joined Sevast'yanov's expedition to Mount Athos. See: K. Vach, "Из истории русско светописы: Архимандрит Антонин и его фотографические опыты в Греции (1856-1860 гг.)" [From the History of Russian *svetopis*: Archimandrite Antonin and His Photographic Experience in Greece], *Православный Палестинский сборник*, 115 (2018), p. 61-100. On the photography in Greece and Constantinople in the 1850s see: G. Edwards, A.X. Xanthakis et alii, *Athens 1839-1900, a Photographic Record*, Athens, 1985; Bahhatin Öztuncay, *James Robertson, Pioneer of Photography in the Ottoman Empire*, Istanbul, 1992

FIGURE 4 The chrysobul of Andronicus Palaeologus of 1289

The result of this expedition was more than impressive: during a 14 month stay on Mt. Athos, about 300 traces of frescoes, icons, and sewing works were made, 1000 colored traces of miniatures and initials in manuscripts, 350 photographs of manuscripts and acts of monasteries, 150 architecture sketches, as well as plans of the monasteries and their surroundings. Apart from making copies, Sevast'anol gathered his own collection of icons, fragments of wall-paintings, manuscripts and items of applied arts. In October of 1860, the materials were transported via Constantinople to St. Petersburg, and in December Sevast'anol returned to Russia himself. The objects (both original ones and copies, including photographs) were demonstrated in March of 1861 in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg and made a big impression on the Russian educated society.¹³

After a long and complicated history of rivalry between different institutions and Sevast'anol himself, his collection was dispersed. The icons and their copies are today preserved in the State Hermitage Museum and the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, and in the Tretyakov Gallery, the A.S. Pushkin Museum and the State Historical Museum in Moscow. The photographs of manuscripts are stored in the National Library of Russia, while the archive materials are in the Russian State Library in Moscow.¹⁴

13 The fate of Sevast'anol's collection, as well as the process of organization the expedition of 1859-60 are described in: G.I. Dovgallo, "Собираательская деятельность П.И. Севастьянова (по материалам его личного архива)" [The Collectors' Activities of P.I. Sevast'anol (Based on Materials from his Personal Archives)], in: *Древнерусское искусство. Балканы. Русь* [Old Russian Art. The Balkans. Rus'], St. Petersburg, 1995, pp. 242-256; Iu. Ryatnitskii, "И дым Отечества нам сладок и приятен" ["The Smoke of the Motherland is Sweet and Pleasant for Us"], *Наше наследие* [Our Heritage], 11 (2014); 112 (2015); N.P. Pivovarova, "Еще раз об афонских экспедициях П.И. Севастьянова" [Once More about the Athos Expeditions of P.I. Sevast'anol], in: *Spicilegium Byzantino-Rossicum. Сборник статей к 80-летию члена-корреспондента РАН И. П. Медведева*, ed. L.A. Gerd, Moscow, 2015, pp. 231-236; L.A. Gerd, K.A. Vach, "Переписка архимандрита Антонина (Капустина) и П.И. Севастьянова. 1858-1862" [The Correspondence of Archimandrite Antonin (Kapustin) and P.I. Sevast'anol], *Православный Палестинский сборник* 114 (2017), pp. 64-113; O.L. Solomina, "Афонская экспедиция 1859-1860 гг. в документах и письмах ее участников" [The Athos Expedition of 1859-1860 in the Documents and Letters of its Participants], *Православный Палестинский сборник* 115 (2018), pp. 249-280.

14 *Искусство Византии в собраниях СССР. Каталог выставки* [Byzantine Art in the Collections of the USSR. Catalog of the Exhibition], vol. 3, Moscow, 1977, No. 955, 957; *Athos. Monastic Life on the Holy Mountain (Exhibition Catalog)*, Helsinki City Art Museum, Art Museum Tennis Palace. Maahenki, 2006, pp. 167, 169, 172, 177-178, 197-198, 259, 262-264; I.L. Kyzlasova, «Новое о коллекции П.И. Севастьянова» [New Data about the Collection of P.I. Sevast'anol], *Вопросы славяно-русской палеографии, кодикологии, эпиграфики* [Questions of Slavo-Russian Paleography, Codicology and Epigraphy], Moscow, 1987,

2 Sevast'anov and Photography in Paris in the 1850s

As many other Russians of his time, Sevast'anov received his training in photography in Paris, the cultural center of the 19th century. It was in Paris where he took his first lessons in 1856; it was there that he bought the equipment for all of his expeditions; it was there that he first demonstrated the results of his work on Athos. After leaving Athos in October of 1857, Sevast'anov returned to Paris and demonstrated the photographs of the treasures he had discovered in the Photographic Society. At the same time, he donated a number of his photographs to the French Photographic Society.¹⁵ This event was immediately reflected in the popular photographic journal, *Le Lumière*.¹⁶ On February 5, 1858, Sevast'anov pronounced a lecture in the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.¹⁷ On arriving in Paris in the second half of the 1850s, Sevast'anov found himself in the atmosphere of the flourishing luxury of the Second Empire, full of desire for arts, both traditional, and forward-looking to new inventions and industrial progress. The leading photo ateliers of the French capital, those of Nadar, Disdéri and others, though struggling in competition among themselves, found fertile soil for their development.¹⁸

Among the representatives of the Russian diaspora in Paris we find several photographers, members of the French Photographic Society. The first of them was "the father of Russian photography", Sergey Levitskii (1819-1898). Levitskii first arrived in Paris in 1845-48, where he met Daguerre, studied the art of photography and received a golden medal for his large format daguerreotypes. In 1858, he again installed in Paris, where he opened a studio, making photographic portraits of the aristocracy. Upon returning to Russia in 1866, he was

pp. 71-76 ; E.E. Granstrem, I.P. Medvedev, « Photographies des documents athonites (Collection P.I. Sevast'janov) », *REB* 33 (1975), pp. 277-293.

15 In 1857 Sevast'anov donated to the SFP a number of photographs of manuscripts (Bulletin de la Société française de Photographie, vol. IV, 1858, p. 4); in 1858 an album of 1500 photos from Mount Athos (Bulletin de la Société française de Photographie, vol. V, 1859, p. 153).

16 Letter to Sevast'anov, dated November 9, 1857, (Russian State Library (furtherafter RGB), f. 269/1, Carton 11, d. 6). Sevast'anov knew the editor in chief of *La Lumière* Ernest Lacan since 1850 (a letter from Lacan to Sevast'anov, Dec. 22 [1850]. Ibid., carton 16, d. 60).

17 Pierre Sevastianoff, « Sur le Mont Athos, ses monastères et les manuscrits de leurs bibliothèques », *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Comptes-Rendus de séances de l'année 1858*, vol. 11 (1859), pp. 25-28. [P. Sevastianoff], 'Extrait d'une lecture faite à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, le 5 février 1858, par M.P. de Sevastianoff, Conseiller d'état actuel et membre de la Société Impériale Russe de Géographie', in: *Revue Archéologique*. No.1 (avril à septembre 1858), pp. 28-31.

18 Sagne Jean, *L'atelier du photographe, 1840-1940*, Paris, 1984, pp. 56-76

the only one who took pictures of the Tsar's family.¹⁹ Sevast'anov might have known Levitskii from St. Petersburg, and surely met him in Paris as well.

Photographic methods were required by the Russian authorities for discovering the newly joined regions of the Russian Empire. It was in the Caucasus Mineral Waters near Piatigorsk, where Levitskii made his first photographs. In the 1850s, the Governor of the Caucasus, A. I. Bariatinskii, delegated the engineer A.B. Ivanitskii to Paris to study photography. In Paris he became a member of the French Photographic Society, and Sevast'anov might have met him there as well.²⁰

Many of the Russian aristocratic diaspora were enthusiastic about the new art of photography. Among them was Gabriël Riumin (1841-1870), a young nobleman born in Lausanne, who was a member of the French photographic society since 1857. In June 1858, he took part in the discussions of the F.S.P. on using dry collodion paper, as proposed by Henri Corbin.²¹ In September 1858, Riumin made a report about making carbon prints.²² In 1857, he accompanied Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaevich on his journey to the Near East and took photographs of Pompei, Maples, Sicily, Athens and Jerusalem. Part of the prints were demonstrated in the FSP in 1859 and donated to the Society.²³ In 1859-1860 he edited a newspaper called *Gazette du Nord*, where he printed part of the description of the journey of the Grand Duke; along with the newspaper he proposed to subscribers an album with 10 photographs of views taken during the journey. At the same time, he opened a photography studio at Villedo street No. 10.²⁴ In his letter to Sevast'anov from Palermo (January 1857), Riumin discussed a future expedition to Mount Athos, and expressed his (negative) opinion on the candidature of August Leborgne, the future companion of Sevast'anov's expedition.²⁵

The success of Sevast'anov's exposition and lecture was prepared by both the general interest of French society in the Orient and by the already existing

19 *Русская фотография. Середина XIX-начало XX века* [Russian Photography. Mid-19th–beginning of the 20th Century], ed. N. Rachmanov (ed.), Moscow, 1996; *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, vol. 2, pp. 853-855.

20 A. Ivanitsky, "Sur les procédés employés en Russie par les photographes", *Bulletin de la Société Française de photographie*, vol. III (1857, June).

21 Session of June 18, 1858. *Bulletin de la Société française de Photographie*, vol. IV (1858), p. 174.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 227.

23 *Bulletin de la Société française de Photographie*, vol. V (1859), p. 85.

24 François Boisjoly, *Répertoire des photographes parisiens du XIX^e siècle*, p. 253; Alkis X. Xanthakis, *History of Greek Photography, 1839-1960*, Athens, 1988, pp. 58-59.

25 G. Riumin—to P. Sevast'anov, s.a. [January 1857]. RGB, fond 269/1, carton 12, d. 52.

FIGURE 5 Carton No. 2

knowledge of Mount Athos from the previous years. In the 1850s interest in Eastern Christianity began growing in Western Europe, though it still could not rival that in classical antiquities. By the mid-1850s, Athos was visited by some French travelers and explorers; first among them was Adolphe Didron, who had a strong interest in Byzantine art and wrote an essay on Christian icon painting;²⁶ it was he who paid special attention to Sevast'anov's presentations in Paris.²⁷ The vice president of the Russian Imperial Academy of Arts, Grigorii Gagarin, (by the way, a photographer himself) spent some time in Paris (since June of 1857), organizing the copying of the best examples of art. A devotee of the study of Byzantine art, he strongly promoted the byzantine style of

26 Adolphe Napoléon Didron (1806-1867), famous French journalist and archeologist. Secretary of the committee for historical studies at the Ministry of Culture, professor of archeology at the Imperial Library. Founder (1844) and director of the journal *Annales archéologiques*. Author of: *Iconographie chrétienne : Histoire de Dieu*, (1844) and first editor of the Mount Athos manuscript of Dionisii of Fournia: *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne grecque et latine avec une introduction et des notes par M. Didron, traduit du manuscrit byzantin «Le Guide de la Peinture»* (1845).

27 In November 1862, Sevast'anov invited Didron to his hotel in Paris to showed him personally his "Athos treasures". A. Didron-P. Sevast'anov, November 14, 1862. RGB, fund 269/1, carton 13, d. 82.

FIGURE 6 Silver book Cover, Pantocrator monastery (17th century)

architecture not only in Russia, but also in the construction of the Russian St. Alexander Church in the French capital.

From the French correspondence of Sevast'anov, preserved in his personal archive collection at the Russian State Library in Moscow, we have more information about his "network" in France. Among his correspondents we find scientists, for example the famous orientalist and specialist in Hindustani languages Garcin de Tassy (4 letters from 1852),²⁸ or the geographer, orientalist and archeologist Edmé François Jomard (1777-1862). Especially helpful for introducing Sevast'anov to the high class society and for his interests in photography was his acquaintance with a noble lady, Henriette Delbore, whom he met first probably in Marseilles in 1853, and with whom he was in contact until 1860.²⁹ She gave him recommendations to different high officials, and even to the Archbishop of Paris, and took care to introduce him to Olympe Aguado, a rich banker and passionate photographer, one of the patrons of French photography.

The expositions of the treasures of Mount Athos and participation in the sessions of the Photographic Society made Sevast'anov famous.³⁰ In 1861, he

²⁸ RGB, fund 269/1, carton 13, d. 12.

²⁹ RGB, fund 269/1, carton 13, d. 70

³⁰ His expeditions to Mount Athos were highly appreciated by the French press. See: Ch. Daremberg, « Application de la photographie à la reproduction des manuscrits du Mont Athos par M. Sevastianoff », *Journal des Débats* (1858, 17 Avril), varieties; A. Didron,

FIGURE 7 A map of India, Vatopedi monastery

got a recommendation letter to Henry de Laroserie, legal adviser to the Court of Auditors.³¹ According to the author of this letter (S. du Torny), Sevast'anov was well received by the Duc de Morny, thanks to whom the doors of all collections were open for him.

After the expedition of 1859-60, Sevast'anov decided to make a phototypical edition of the codex Athos Vatopedi 655, the Geography of Ptolemy (13th century).³² Without being a specialist in the Greek language and Greek paleography, he first consulted prominent German specialists. The geographer and philologist Heinrich Kiepert³³ researched the photographs of the manuscript, comparing them with cod. Colbertianus 1401 from the Paris library. According to the philologists Johan Meineke and Alfred Kirschhoff, the script of Strabo could be dated to the 13th century, without containing many differences from the text already known.³⁴ Well aware of Sevast'anov's work, the Leipzig Professor Konstantin Tischendorf tried to meet him in St. Petersburg in May of 1861 and proposed to connect him with Karl Nobbe, a specialist and editor of Ptolemy.³⁵ The technical side of the edition was provided by the prominent lithograph printer Joseph Lemercier (1803-1887).³⁶ Finally the phototypical edition

"Expédition archéologique au Mont Athos", *Annales archéologiques*, vol. 21 (1861), pp. 173-183; V. Langlois, « Histoire du Mont Athos et de ses monastères, d'après de documents rassemblés par le Conseiller d'état actuel de Sévastianoff », *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, vol. 13 (1866), pp. 165-181.

31 RGB, fund 269/1, carton 14, d. 37.

32 See about the manuscript: Σ.Ν. Καδάς, «Τα εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα» [Illustrated Manuscripts], in: *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Παράδοση-Ιστορία-Τέχνη* [St. Great Vatopedy Monastery. Traditions-History-Art], Άγιον Όρος, 1996, p. 554.

33 Heinrich Kiepert (1818-1899), German geographer and historian, professor of Geography at Berlin University, editor of a series of maps of the Ancient world: *Atlas von Hellas und den hellenischen Kolonien* (1840); *Historisch-geographischer Atlas der alten Welt* (1848); *Atlas antiquus* (1854); *Neuer Handatlas über alle Teile der Erde* (1855); and of two manuals in Ancient geography: *Lehrbuch der alten Geographie* (1877); *Leitfaden der alten Geographie* (1879).

34 H. Kiepert-to Sevast'anov, [1860]. RGB. F. 269/1. Carton 15, d. 31.

35 Tischendorf-to Sevast'anov, Leipzig, June 30, 1861 (RGB, f. 269/1, carton 14, d. 33). As we see from this letter, Tischendorf first met Sevast'anov in Athos in 1859. Karl-Friedrich August Nobbe (1791-1878), classical philologist, professor at Leipzig University and rector of Nicolaischule. See his edition of the Greek text of Ptolemy's Geography: *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*. Edidit Carolus Fridericus Augustus Nobbe, 3 Bände, Leipzig, 1843-1845.

36 Lemercier, Joseph (1803-1887). He started his activities as a studio photographer in 1851. Later he worked in the humid collodion process. Demonstrated at the SFP in 1857, 1859, 1861, 1863, 1864, 1865 and 1869. He was selling reproductions, photogravures, photoglyphics and phototypies. See : François Boisjoly, *Répertoire des photographes parisiens du XIX^e siècle*, p. 179. The technique of photolithography was invented in 1855 by Louis-Alphonse Poitevin among other experimental methods of photomechanical processes. It allowed printing from 500 to 1500 copies (from 8 to 10 per hour); the price varied between 23 and

of the Athos Ptolemy codex appeared in Paris in 1867.³⁷ In Sevast'anov's archives in Moscow, several letters from Lemerrier are preserved.³⁸

3 Sevast'anov's cartons at the French Photographic Society

Strange though it may be, but from among the 1500 photographs donated by Sevast'anov to the S.F.P., not one can be found in Paris.³⁹ However, two large sized (70x89 and 70x85 cm) cartons with reproductions of photographs from Athos are preserved at the F.S.P. Both have the English title "Archeological reproductions taken at Mount Athos by Sévastianoff esq. of Russia—1857". Probably they were prepared for demonstrating them in London, at the Royal Photographic Society. We know that Sevast'anov visited London in March of 1858. However, at that time he had no time to organize an exposition in London: in February he was invited to read his paper at the Academy in Paris, and after a few weeks of intensive preparations, at the beginning of April of 1858, he left for his next expedition to Athos. So the cartons, probably never used, remained in Paris.

70 centimes for one offprint. During 16 months of exploitation (July 1856 to October 1857) Poitevin's atelier produced more than 18000 photolithographies. Soon Poitevin yielded his enterprise to J.-B. Lemerrier, who owned more ateliers and personnel. Lemerrier was already well-known since the mid-1850s: he worked out the plates (clichés) of Tournachon, representing animals at the international competition in 1856; in 1857 the minister of agriculture ordered him to print 120 plates in 2000 copies (Sagne Jean, *L'atelier du photographe, 1840-1940*, Paris, 1984, p.162). The reason for using photolithography in archaeological and other expeditions was more than obvious, taking into account the instability of the photographic prints and their high price. It was used in many editions of that time: *Le Sérapéum de Memphis découvert et décrit par Auguste Mariette* (Paris, 1857); *Exploration archéologique de la Galatie et de la Bithynie [...] exécutée en 1861*. Texte de G. Perrot, photos de J. Delbet. (Paris, 1872, lithographies Lemerrier, procédé Poitevin). See: Michel Frizot, *Nouvelle histoire de la Photographie*, pp. 229-230, 376.

37 *Géographie de Ptolémée. Reproduction photolithographique du manuscrit grec de monastère de Vatopédi au Mont Athos, exécutée d'après les clichés obtenus sur la direction de M. Pierre de Sévastianoff et procédés d'une introduction historique sur le Mont Athos, les monastères et les dépôts littéraires de la presqu'île sainte par Victor Langlois*, Paris, 1867. After a general preface about the history of Mount Athos and its exploration, a catalog of the Athos monastic acts is published.

38 RGB, fund 269/1, Carton 17, d. 76.

39 I express my gratitude to Mrs. Flora Triebel, conservator of the 19th century photo collection at the French National Library for her help in this research. Part of the archive materials of Sevast'anov might have been preserved among the papers of A. Didron, which were lost together with the library of the cathedral of Chartres in the 1940s.

At his lecture in February of 1858, Sevast'anov made a list of the photographs he was presenting: eight photographs from a 16th century Bulgarian Gospel on parchment, preserved at Esphygmenou monastery; six photographs from another Bulgarian Gospel; fourteen photographs from a Greek manuscript from Pantocrator monastery, in 500 folios, decorated with gold and different colors; a photograph from the silver and oak cover of this manuscript; an icon of Apostle Andrew with a silver cover; eighteen pages of the Slavonic Glagolitic Gospel from the Zographou Monastery; eight copies from the 295 folios of the Ptolemy Geography manuscript from Vatopedi monastery; 42 copies of maps from the Vatopedi manuscript; an old incensory made from silver and gold; a Greek cross with a Slavonic inscription; two folios from the Acts of Apostles in Slavonic (12th century); the Liturgy of Chrysostom (a Slavonic roll on parchment, 13th century); two Greek and five Slavonic chrysobouls and sigillions; 33 folios of a golden legend (illuminated). Part of the objects enlisted are presented on the cartons from the S.F.P.

The first carton contains mainly objects concerning the Slavonic culture on Athos: five reproductions of manuscripts (both Greek and Slavonic), 2 of miniatures of a manuscript, 3 pictures of 2 monastic acts, and one of an icon.

Here are Sevast'anov's titles, from left to right (the datings of the original are preserved):

1st row

1. Bulgarian Gospel from the 16th century;
2. Glagolitic Gospel, colored following the original, from the 11th century;⁴⁰
3. Bulgarian Gospel from the 16th century;

2d row

1. Lives of saints from the 11th century. Colored following the original;
2. Greek gold seal from the 13th century;⁴¹

40 Russian National Library (RNB) Glag. 1, 11th century (Sevast'anov's date: 8-th century), f. 76v-77, end of the Gospel of Matthew and beginning of Mark). The manuscript was first discovered at Zographou monastery in 1843. In 1844 the Russian slavist Viktor Grigorovich viewed and described it. The manuscript was given to Sevast'anov by the abbot Anthym as a gift for the Russian Emperor Alexander II. In 1861, it was deposited at the Imperial Public Library (now the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg, Glagolitic No. 1). The manuscript contains an incomplete text of the Gospels, dated to the end of the 10th or beginning of the 11th centuries. Edition: *Quattor Euangeliorum codex glagoliticus olim Zographensis nunc Petropolitanus*, ed. V. Jagić, Berolini, 1879; Graz, 1954).

41 Chrysoboullon of Andronikos II Palaeologus given to the monastery of Zographou of August of (6797) 1289, confirming all the estates, rights and privileges of the monastery (Granstrem-Medvedev, p. 281, no. 32; *Actes de Zographou*, eds. W. Regel, E. Kurtz, B. Korabiev (=Византийский временник (1907), приложение [appendix] 1, pp. 29-31, No. XI)

3. Bulgarian gold seal from the 14th century;⁴²
4. Greek gold seal from the 13th century (the same act as no. 2);
5. Lives of saints from the 11th century (the same ms. as no. 1)

3d row

1. Glagolitic Gospel. The letters in red are colored to imitate the original;
2. Icon "Figure of a Saint with gold chased work (=gold casing)"⁴³
3. Bulgarian Gospel from the 15th century

The second carton has the same title and contains 8 photographs.

1. Upper left: Ptolemy's plan of India from the 13th century.⁴⁴
2. Lower left: Geographical text from the 13th century, colored following the original.
3. Middle upper row: Greek cross: front view, back view.⁴⁵
4. Middle row in the middle: Silver cover from a manuscript from the 17th century.⁴⁶
5. Middle down row: a Greek manuscript from the 12th century
6. Upper right: Ptolemy's plan of India. Colored following the original, from the 13th century
7. Lower right: Geographical text from the 13th century (the same as No. 2, in black and white).

42 Chrysoboullon of the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Alexandr of March of 6850 (1342), confirming the donations given to the Zographou monastery by his relative, Emperor John V Palaiologos. Latest edition: Cyril Pavlikianov, "Authentic medieval Slavic documents kept in the Bulgarian Athonite monastery of Zographou (1342-1572)", *Cyrrillomethodianum* 21 (2016), pp. 53-129.

43 Icon of St. Andrew, previously given to Andrei Murav'ev from the Protaton, later decorated by him with a silver cover with gold, and donated to St. Andrew's Skete).

44 Cod. Athos Vatopedi 655.

45 Altar cross from Protaton treasury, 15th-early 16th centuries. Obverse: filigree with stones and an imbossed insert "Crucifix with forthcoming" in the center. Reverse: a silver plaque with a Greek inscription. Edition and description: *The Treasury of the Protaton*. Vol. 1 (Mount Athos, 2001): 63-69, fig. 11-13.

46 Moldo-Wallachian work of the 17th century (Sevast'anov's date: 12th century), Pantocrator Monastery. The cover is used for a miniature parchment manuscript of the New Testament and Psalter (Pantocrator 234, 16.5×11.5 cm). A galvanoplastic copy of this cover was made in St. Petersburg after Sevast'anov's copy and is conserved as a cover of the Zographou Glagolitic Gospel. In the inscription under the Annunciation scene, the names of the Great Komis of Wallachia Barkan and his sons Radul and Mandrikul are written.

4 Conclusion

The two cartons of Petr Sevast'anov's photos from Mount Athos are a precious contribution to the history of Byzantine studies of the mid-19-th century. The images presented there are the first demonstration of basic Greek and Slavonic manuscripts, acts and artifacts to the learned public of that time and in fact opened a new period of research of Mount Athos cultural treasures. For about 50 years Sevast'anov's photos were the only source for most researchers of these monuments. The photos are important for the history of scientific links between Russia and France of the late 1850-s, as well as for the history of photography.

Acknowledgement

This research was financed by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, project No. 17-04-00555 OGN.